

GUN VIOLENCE

Canadians endorse imposing mandatory jail terms for crimes committed with firearms

Country split on the effectiveness of a national ban on handguns

[VANCOUVER – Jan. 9, 2008] – While many Canadian adults believe tougher sentencing guidelines would work to curb gun violence, the country is clearly divided on the rationale for a complete ban on handguns, an Angus Reid Strategies poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative national sample, 78 per cent of respondents think Canada has a serious gun violence problem, and 39 per cent believe the country also faces a gang problem that affects the entire country.

The provincial breakdown shows that a large number of Quebecers (88%) are concerned about gun violence, while a majority of respondents in British Columbia (51%) are particularly worried about gang activity.

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of four possible measures to reduce gun violence. More than four-in-five Canadians believe imposing mandatory jail terms for crimes committed with firearms (84%) and taking action to stop illegal gun smuggling from the United States (83%) would work. In addition, three-in-four respondents (74%) endorse the introduction of new outreach programs to steer youth away from gangs.

However, Canadians are divided in their assessment of the most controversial proposal: enacting a complete ban on handguns.

In the survey, 49 per cent of respondents believe a

KEY FINDINGS

- » **78% think Canada has a serious gun violence problem**
- » **45% say a handgun ban would be justified, 46% disagree**
- » **Mandatory jail terms: Effective 84%, Ineffective 13%**
- » **Stopping U.S. gun smugglers: Effective 83%, Ineffective 14%**
- » **Youth outreach programs: Effective 74%, Ineffective 23%**
- » **Handgun ban: Effective 49%, Ineffective 49%**
- » **39% think Canada has a serious gang problem and it affects the whole country**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

*From December 19 to December 20, 2007, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of **1,052 adult Canadians**. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, **19 times out of 20**. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

ban on handguns would be effective in reducing gun violence in Canada, while 49 per cent deem it ineffective. In a poll conducted in August, 55 per cent of respondents thought a handgun ban would be helpful.

When asked whether a complete ban on handguns would be justified, 45 per cent of Canadians agree and 46 per cent disagree. Residents of Alberta (53%), Manitoba and Saskatchewan (56%) and Atlantic Canada (63%) clearly oppose the notion of a ban, while Quebecers (51%) believe it should be contemplated.

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Gun violence in Canada

Next we'd like to ask you some questions about gun violence. In your view, is gun violence in Canada a very serious problem, moderately serious, not too serious, or not a problem?

	Region							Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Very serious	42%	41%	29%	30%	41%	52%	42%	36%	47%
Moderately serious	36%	40%	36%	30%	36%	36%	30%	35%	36%
Not too serious	17%	15%	25%	24%	18%	8%	24%	19%	14%
Not a problem	4%	4%	2%	15%	4%	3%	1%	6%	2%
Not sure	2%	0%	8%	0%	1%	0%	3%	3%	0%

Trend – Is gun violence in Canada a very serious problem, moderately serious, not too serious, or not a problem?

	December 2007	August 2007
Very serious	42%	38%
Moderately serious	36%	37%
Not too serious	17%	17%
Not a problem	4%	6%
Not sure	2%	2%

A handgun ban in Canada
Some people have called for a complete ban on handguns in Canada. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
A complete ban would be justified, since current regulations are not working and guns stolen from legal owners are being used in crimes	45%	48%	33%	32%	48%	51%	29%	41%	48%
A complete ban would be unjustified, as it would affect law-abiding Canadians such as collectors and target shooters	46%	44%	53%	56%	44%	39%	63%	55%	38%
Not sure	9%	8%	14%	13%	9%	9%	8%	4%	14%

Trend – Some people have called for a complete ban on handguns in Canada. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	December 2007	August 2007
A complete ban would be justified, since current regulations are not working and guns stolen from legal owners are being used in crimes	45%	52%
A complete ban would be unjustified, as it would affect law-abiding Canadians such as collectors and target shooters	46%	40%
Not sure	9%	8%

A handgun ban in Canada									
How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing gun violence in Canada? - Enacting a complete ban on handguns									
		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Effective	49%	55%	28%	39%	47%	61%	48%	46%	51%
Not effective	49%	44%	72%	54%	51%	38%	51%	53%	45%
Not sure	2%	1%	0%	7%	2%	1%	2%	0%	3%

Trend – Enacting a complete ban on handguns		
	December 2007	August 2007
Effective	49%	55%
Not effective	49%	44%
Not sure	2%	1%

Mandatory jail terms									
How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing gun violence in Canada? - Imposing mandatory jail terms for crimes committed with firearms									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Effective	84%	89%	75%	91%	84%	82%	85%	82%	85%
Not effective	13%	10%	17%	9%	13%	16%	14%	15%	12%
Not sure	3%	0%	8%	0%	4%	2%	1%	2%	3%

Trend – Imposing mandatory jail terms for crimes committed with firearms		
	December 2007	August 2007
Effective	84%	87%
Not effective	13%	12%
Not sure	3%	1%

Youth outreach programs How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing gun violence in Canada? - Introducing new outreach programs to steer youth away from gangs									
		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Effective	74%	68%	60%	84%	70%	86%	77%	71%	77%
Not effective	23%	32%	31%	16%	27%	13%	22%	26%	21%
Not sure	2%	0%	8%	1%	2%	1%	1%	3%	2%

Trend – Introducing new outreach programs to steer youth away from gangs		
	December 2007	August 2007
Effective	74%	73%
Not effective	23%	25%
Not sure	2%	2%

Gun smuggling from the U.S. How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing gun violence in Canada? - Taking action to stop illegal gun smuggling from the United States									
		Region						Gender	
	Total	BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Effective	83%	76%	70%	76%	86%	91%	79%	83%	84%
Not effective	14%	23%	22%	24%	12%	7%	17%	15%	14%
Not sure	2%	1%	9%	0%	2%	1%	4%	2%	2%

Trend – Taking action to stop illegal gun smuggling from the United States		
	December 2007	August 2007
Effective	83%	82%
Not effective	14%	16%
Not sure	2%	1%

Gangs in Canada									
Which one of the following statements comes closest to your view?									
	Total	Region						Gender	
		BC	AB	MB/SK	ONT	PQ	ATL	Male	Female
Canada has a serious gang problem and it affects the whole country	39%	51%	45%	42%	32%	45%	19%	32%	44%
Canada's gang problem is confined to specific areas and people	55%	46%	52%	57%	60%	49%	65%	62%	48%
Canada does not have a serious gang problem	4%	3%	1%	1%	5%	3%	13%	4%	4%
Not sure	3%	0%	2%	0%	4%	4%	2%	2%	4%

Trend – Which one of the following statements comes closest to your view?		
	December 2007	August 2007
Canada has a serious gang problem and it affects the whole country	39%	39%
Canada's gang problem is confined to specific areas and people	55%	55%
Canada does not have a serious gang problem	4%	2%
Not sure	3%	4%

Angus Reid Strategies is a North American full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995. Located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, our team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Angus Reid Strategies has been successful in predicting the outcome of the 2007 provincial elections in:

Quebec: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=37>

Manitoba: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=56>

Ontario: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=129>

Saskatchewan: <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=138>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**